



CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF THEORETICAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Volume: 03 Issue: 08 | Aug 2022 ISSN: 2660-5317
<https://cajotas.centralasianstudies.org>

Amir Temur and Interaction of Agriculture and Crafts in and Timurid Empire

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Received 24th Jun 2022, Accepted 18th Jul 2022, Online 10th Aug 2022

Abstract: This article analyzes the topic of interaction between agriculture and handicrafts in the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids.

It analyzes the role of agriculture in the country's development, its role in supplying raw materials to textile, carpet, tanning, shoemaking, paper production and other industries.

The study of the interaction of agriculture and crafts in the kingdom of Amir Temur is of practical importance for today. During that period, great scientific experiences were accumulated for the production of high-quality and useful products for human health.

Keywords: Amir Temur, crafts, textiles, carpet making, tanning, shoemaking, paper production.

As we are all aware, the growth of agriculture eventually resulted in the creation of civilizations on earth.

The growth of the state and society, as well as the provision of human existence, were all strongly correlated with the development of agriculture in the ancient and mediaeval eras.

because agriculture was the main source of food and contributed significantly to the state's, people's, and society's revenue. Even now, agricultural products are crucial to preventing world famine, and this sector has a big impact on other sectors as well.

Even now, it might be quite useful to research how agriculture and crafts interacted throughout the rule of Amir Temur and his successors.

Numerous agricultural goods served as the necessary raw materials for the craft industry during the rule of Amir Temur and the Timurids. Agriculture accounted for a sizeable portion of the raw resources used in the textile, pottery, construction, confectionery, and other industries. At the same time, agricultural product production has gotten increasingly specialised in order to supply the raw materials needed by the craft industries. The growth of handicrafts raised the demand for agricultural raw materials, which led to the emergence of new forms of handicrafts in the social division of labour. Depending on the sector, the growing development of the handicraft industries has taken place in various geographic locations.

We can observe that agricultural goods were considerably larger in number and quality in this area due to the large range of handicrafts at that time because Samarkand was the capital of the Samarkand kingdom,

where handicrafts were widely developed. It is clear that agriculture and handicrafts had a mutually beneficial influence on one another throughout the reign of Amir Temur. Around 500 different types of handicrafts were produced in Samarkand at the time, so it was important to find solutions for how to supply them all with raw materials and get them to both internal and international markets. It is clear that the raw materials produced by agriculture had an impact on the growth of handicrafts.

Agriculture is necessary for the development of the textile industry. Agricultural raw resources made up the majority of its finished goods.

A light and thin fabric known as fota was sold in the markets of Samarkand, Amir Temur, and other Timurid state capitals. Wool, silk, and cotton are used to make fota. The agriculture industries of cotton, silk, and animal husbandry were all involved in the production of fota¹. In the locations used to produce fota, special emphasis is dedicated to the cultivation of cotton, cocoons, and cattle products. The long scarf that women wear on their heads, the belt that is tied over the top, and the fabric that men wear in the shape of a turban are all referred to as "fota."

In the sources, there are judges' verdicts that a boy named Mir Mukhammad was apprenticed to Ustad Shakhmukhammad Fotabaf, and a boy named Subkhonkuli was apprenticed to Ustad Subhi².

At that time, the motley fabric, which was considered popular in the domestic and foreign markets, was also made of cotton fiber, and sometimes a little silk was added to it.

As a rule, the motley, mostly decorated with striped stripes, was in high demand among the population. For the production of textile products, yarn, silk, wool, linen, hemp and other fibers are woven into various colorful, flowery, elegant and rough fabrics. Yarn, silk, wool, flax, hemp and other fibers, corresponding to the share of agriculture, definitely had a significant impact on the development of textiles.

Even during the Timurid era, there were villages specializing in the production of certain types of fabrics. Residents of Olachaboftan village near Bukhara were engaged in motley production. The products produced by the artisans of such villages were usually intended for sale in other countries³.

So, agriculture, crafts, and trade of that time influenced each other, and the development of the state depended on the equal development of these areas.

Near Bukhara, the village of Zandana was famous for its "zandanachi" fabric production workshops. Zandanachi cloth, which was popular since the early Middle Ages, was in great demand in the 14th and 15th centuries, and it was made of cotton. The Zandana cloth used high-quality cotton fibers, and special attention was paid to the cultivation of cotton in these regions and in the kingdom as a whole.

A letter written on birch bark found during archaeological excavations in Novgorod and a document on 1401 in the archives of the Teutonic Order revealed that the zandanachi was spread both in Western and Eastern Europe⁴.

Among the goods sent to European countries during the period of Amir Temur and Timurids, "zandanachi" was considered one of the fabrics that ordinary townspeople could not afford to buy. Cotton fiber was woven from the thin gray type intended for the wealthy population to thick, unbleached, yellow or gray silk. For the general population, a much thicker, but more heat-retaining colorful gray knit.

¹ Amir Temur in world history / Responsible editor: Kh-Karomatov. The team of authors: S. Saiddosimov (leader), A. Akhmedov, B. Akhmedov and others. Completed and Revised Second Edition. — T.: «Shark», 2001-p. 93.

² Amir Temur in world history...-p 93.

³ Amir Temur in world history...-p. 93.

⁴ Amir Temur in world history...-p. 93.

Chitgars prepared the paint themselves. Undoubtedly, this situation required them to know certain chemical processes, to be aware of the art of patterns⁵.

These products woven in Movarounnahr certainly had an important influence on the trade of the Great Silk Road.

Silk fabrics produced in cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khojand, Kokand, Margilon, Namangan were exported to Eastern and European countries along the Great Silk Road.

In the field of handicrafts, along with textiles, pottery, carpet making and construction have also developed in close connection with the development of agriculture.

Carpets, mats and felts were made not only by urban artisans, but also by rural people, especially by herders. The incomparable rise in the development of Sirkor pottery also coincides with the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century⁶.

At that time, straw was considered an important raw material widely used in various fields. When threshing wheat, barley, rye, oats and other grain crops with oxen, horses, and donkeys, the stalks are crushed and small straw is formed. It is also widely used in animal husbandry. Before feeding to cattle, straw is treated in special ways: boiling in boiling water, steaming in boiling steam, mixing with draf, beet root, cut tubers, table salt and other useful products to increase its palatability and nutritional value. Straw was used to cover cattle.

Straw was also widely used as a local building material. It is added to the clay in straw plaster, it ensures the sturdiness and non-cracking of the plaster⁷.

The mulberry tree is mainly planted to breed and feed silkworms. There were shops selling cocoons in Samarkand and Bukhara.

The colour preparation technique has undergone extensive testing and development over many years, and it is typically kept a secret. Paint was utilised in numerous crafts besides textiles and pottery. Particularly, the manufacture of paper makes extensive use of natural and some mineral colours. Numerous manuscripts with elaborate borders made of pink, light turquoise, yellow, and purple papers were cut and adhered.

Dye plants were cultivated, including the royan plant, which was used to obtain red and yellow dyes. Henna was used in the preparation of ink, in cosmetics, as a medicine, and for coloring paper. According to the sources, in Bukhara, "a valuable dye called Kirmiz was obtained from small tree worms in the desert⁸".

According to Sultan Ali Mashhadi, saffron was used to give the paper a yellow color. Saffron, henna and a few drops of ink were added to the paper to obtain the desired color, which is called "Chinese paper"⁹.

Samarkand paper has been famous since ancient times, and this tradition developed in a new stage during the Timurid period. This unique paper is mainly produced by long-term and painstaking work on mulberry branches. Therefore, special attention is paid to mulberry cultivation in the kingdom not only for silk production, but also for paper production.

⁵ The same source.

⁶ Crafts of the Timurid period // <http://dkm.gov.uz/uz/temurijlar-davri-unarmandciligi>

⁷ NEU Straw

⁸ Six and a half centuries ago, lemons were grown in Amir Temur's garden // <https://zarnews.uz/post/bundan-olti-yarim-asr-avval-amir-temur-bogida-limon-ostirilgan>

⁹ Amir Temur in the world history...-p. 93.

During the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, Samarkand paper was sold to Eastern and Western countries through caravan routes, and it was appreciated in the world market for its ripeness, high quality, preservation for centuries and, most importantly, the fact that it was made with hard work. Even the works of Nizamiddin Shami and Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi called "Zafarnoma" were written on Samarkand paper. Since Samarkand paper is made from mulberry, special attention is paid to the cultivation of high-quality mulberry trees in agriculture. In the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, we can observe that agriculture played a major role in Samarkand's role as a trade and economic center of the Eastern world.

Pottery products were also widely used in the storage of agricultural products - grains, corns and other products. During the archeological excavations, large hummocks for storing grains were found. At the same time, most of the household goods were produced by potters. During the archeological excavations in Shahrukhiya, a large area of potters was discovered and studied at the foot of the city, separated from it by a road.

Production sites, tools for the potter's wheel, a bath for the finished clay mass, courtyard-porches for drying semi-finished products, one-chamber and two-chamber clay ovens for baking dishes, with details of production supplies for potters - needles for hanging dishes, open-type dishes sepoy stands for installation, clay molds for making vessels in sealed decorative forms, samples of various broken vessels, etc.¹⁰, show that pottery products played an important role in the development of agriculture in the reign of Amir Temur.

Shoemaking was one of the crafts that flourished in the cities of Amir Temur and the Timurid state. Depending on the type of shoes produced, these artisans were divided into specialists such as shoemakers, soft-soled leather bootmakers, cobblers, hard-soled leather (muza) bootmakers¹¹. Many men's shoes were made. Cobblers who repair old shoes also formed a separate group of shoemakers. In the 13th and 14th centuries, slave labor was used in large state-owned craft workshops.

Part of the population specializes in tanning. They were mainly active in the outskirts of the city, like soap makers, carpenters and other artisans. After all, the unpleasant smell emanating from processed raw materials also required the organization of such a production in the outskirts of the city¹².

During this period, all kinds of flowery, thick feather and bald carpets, mats were also woven and felt mats were printed from wool. Felt mat was widely used not only as a mat in the household, but also in the preparation of military uniforms. Different carpets decorated the palaces of Amir Temur. On the occasion of family celebrations of the ruling dynasty, the return of the ruler from military campaigns and the arrival of ambassadors, the main streets of the capital cities and the walls of the houses were decorated with carpets¹³.

In the sources, there are names of fabrics woven from silk, such as satin, kimkhob, banoras and dukhoba, as well as soft, shiny khoro, elegant and flowery debo.

Of course, different textiles were available for the wealthy, middle class, and working class. It was easy to ascertain a person's social level based on the quality and decoration of the fabric used to make their clothing.

¹⁰ Buryakov Yu.F., Tashkent Shahrukhiya - a large trade and craft center of medieval Maverannahr (according to archaeological sources) Uzbekistan in the Middle Ages: History and Culture. Dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Professor Roziya Galievna Mukminova, Doctor of History (Lectures of the International Conference) Tashkent, 2003. -p. 103.

¹¹ Amir Temur in the world history...-p. 95.

¹² Buryakov Yu.F., Tashkent Shahrukhiya - a large trade and craft center of medieval Maverannahr

¹³ Amir Temur in the world history... -p. 94.

Additionally, silk and patchwork textiles, as well as beautiful curtains, are used to adorn the walls and tents of the palace. In their writings, authors like Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi, Ibn Arabshakh, Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo, and others noted the tastefully ornamented streets and squares.

In actuality, agriculture and cattle breeding went hand in hand with the development of carpet manufacturing.

Carpet weaving has been widespread among nomadic tribes since ancient times. It is made only from plant fibers (cotton, flax, jute) and wool (sheep, goat, camel wool). The sheared wool for carpet weaving is washed and cleaned, combed in iron combs, and yarn is spun from the combed wool. Threads are dyed with various natural dyes¹⁴.

Agriculture and animal breeding during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids encompassed a larger range of issues than we could expect nowadays. As we noted above, dyes were also made from natural trees, plants, and insects. The most intriguing aspect of them all was that they were all superior items that were good for human health and ecologically sound.

Some raw materials are imported. Local villagers, well aware of market supply and demand for cost and scarcity, focused on growing monand raw materials in these areas. For example, in Bukhara, blacksmithing has developed in accordance with blacksmith crafts. Cattle farming developed due to the increased demand for it, and this factor also played an important role in foreign trade.

The members of the agrarian society made the most of their opportunities at the time and maintained a regular and organic relationship with nature. They were the greatest scholars of their era, not just in their fields, and we can see that they were well-versed in all aspects of nature. As a result, any handicrafts they produced have attained the status of art and have maintained their quality for centuries. At that time, the interrelationship of nature, man and society, existence was much more perfect than it is today. Craftsmen have a comprehensive understanding of the details and knowledge of their profession in relation to other fields. Balance of quantity and quality is ensured, market marketing, demand and supply laws are followed.

We believe that in order for modern agriculture and handicrafts to develop in a mutually beneficial way, it is important to take into account interdisciplinary approaches, the production of environmentally sound goods intended to protect human health from a Middle Ages perspective, and through these principles, reconsider the issues of agriculture, handicrafts, and trade, as well as the development of the state and society in general.

¹⁴ NEU, Letter G. - Tashkent, 2001. -p. 314.